CENTER FOR ARMY LESSONS LEARNED

SPRING 89 Non-Mechanized Forces

CATA Fort Leavenworth

CENTER FOR ARMY LESSONS LEARNED
NCO LESSONS LEARNED

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INTRODUCTION

1. Non-mechanized units have a wide variety of missions. They are expected to fight in environments ranging from the jungles of Central America, to the deserts of North Africa, to the cities and forests of Europe. To meet this variety of missions the Army has developed Light, Airborne and Air Assault divisions as well as Ranger Battalions and Special Forces Groups. Each of these units is equipped and manned differently for unique missions.

2. The intent of this newsletter is to provide Lessons Learned applicable to all non-mechanized forces. These lessons learned have their genesis in combat, joint and unit exercises, as well as the wealth of experience gained from our combat training centers. Prior to 1987, the only CTC available for training was the National Training Center (NTC) at Fort Irvin, California. The NTC primarily trains mechanized forces, though non-mechanized forces have participated in these training exercises. Since October of 1987, the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) at Ft. Chaffee, Arkansas, has been in full operation. Non-mechanized forces now have an opportunity to train at a facility comparable to the NTC, but tailored to fit their specific missions.

3. This is the first document on non-mechanized Lessons Learned. CALL's intent is to help units improve their home station training program and assist in their preparation for war. If your unit has identified any combat relevant lessons learned, share them with the rest of the Army by contacting the Center for Army Lessons Learned, AV 552-2132.

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The following lessons learned, presented in the seven BOS format, are drawn from combat and experience at the combat training centers.

****INTELLIGENCE****

COMBAT RECONNAISSANCE OPERATIONS

Combat Intelligence is critical to a commander's understanding of the battlefield. Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB) and a strong reconnaissance program are tools the commander uses to see the battlefield.

A Historical Perspective

When General MacArthur and his staff planned an attack of Buna in late 1942, they could not make a ground reconnaissance of the terrain their troops were to operate. The entire Buna campaign revolved around the movement of troops on three axes of advance: two overland and one by sea. The overland routes crossed the torturous Owen Stanley Mountains. The movement took weeks longer to accomplish than MacArthur's planners had anticipated. All supplies had to be hand carried up and down the slippery mountain slopes and over innumerable jungle streams. Shoes, uniforms, food and equipment all rotted in the rain forest. Jungle diseases, leeches and stagnant water wreaked havoc with the troops moving overland.

The troops made it to Buna, but the strong Japanese positions and nightmarish terrain around the Japanese lines slowed the attack. Buna was not taken for another two months and even then only at appalling costs. A reconnaissance of the area prior to the operation would have foretold of the obvious difficulties the attacking soldiers would have to overcome.

(Taken from Jay Luvaas, "Buna 19 November 1942 - 2 January 1943: A “Leavenworth Nightmare” in America's First Battles, pp 86-225.)

Lessons Learned

* The scout platoon is best suited and trained for the development of combat information.

* The scout platoon, however, is a small unit with a very large mission. The following elements are available to the battalion commander to augment the intelligence collection effort:

- Artillery forward observers and Combat Observation and Laser Teams (COLT).

- Stinger Teams.

- Engineers can evaluate the use of terrain and location of obstacles.

- Ground surveillance radars and remote sensors.

- Aircraft, both Army and Air Force.

- Patrols from organic rifle companies.

Note: Soldiers conducting reconnaissance patrols must understand they are collecting information and are not conducting combat patrols.

* Night vision devices on organic weapons can be used to supplement the reconnaissance effort.

* Reconnaissance assets must continually assess the area of operations (AO) in light of the mission that the battalion must accomplish.

* Reconnaissance must confirm and feed intel to support the decision support template.

* Commanders must reconfigure their assets to provide sufficient communications to reconnaissance elements.

* The reconnaissance effort is planned and controlled by the S2. The key to making reconnaissance efforts effective is the briefing the S2 gives the reconnaissance assets. Tell them exactly:

- what you want them to do,

- where you want them to go and

- what intel you want them to provide.

SECURITY

Comprised of combat arms, combat support and combat service support units, the non-mechanized battalion operating in a non-linear, low intensity battlefield faces unique security problems.

Commanders can provide security to the force by countering the enemies reconnaissance efforts and maintaining aggressive local security.

Countering Enemy Reconnaissance

Enemy units place high value on reconnaissance to identify the location, size and intention of the friendly forces. To protect the force, and keep the enemy off balance, a battalion commander must find the enemy reconnaissance effort and kill it.

A tool to finding the enemy's reconnaissance effort is the counter-reconnaissance and surveillance plan.

Lessons Learned

* The S2 plans and executes the counter-reconnaissance plan in coordination with the S3 and the entire staff. The S2 cannot delegate the security effort to the companies. Acentralized counter-reconnaissance plan is critical to success.

* Detect enemy reconnaissance efforts by employing multiple security elements and systems to provide depth to the counter-reconnaissance effort. Place more than one surveillance asset on each expected enemy avenue of approach. For example, cover an avenue of approach with an OP, and back it up with a Ground Surveillance Radar. This provides redundancy, capitalizes on the strengths of each system, and reduces the possibility of the enemy by-passing a single system without being detected.

* Avoid having two reconnaissance patrols cover the same area. False reports and fratricide may result.

* Once an enemy reconnaissance element is located, act quickly to kill it. This may be accomplished through observed fires, attack helicopters, or a counter-reconnaissance combat patrol on-call for that mission.

* Avoid using scouts to perform counter-reconnaissance combat patrols, since it risks the loss of this unique and highly trained asset.

Historical Example

A counter-reconnaissance force used in Vietnam employed three to five lift helicopters, two to four Cobras and an infantry platoon on strip alert. When the battalion observed enemy reconnaissance elements, the reaction force, working as a team, engaged them via an air assault with fire support from the Cobras. When the ground element either killed or forced the enemy reconnaissance to displace, the reaction force returned to the airfield and prepared for the next insertion. This technique provided intelligence, force security and allowed the battalion to retain the initiative.

LOCAL SECURITY

Local security is comprised of effective perimeter security and aggressive patrolling in the vicinity of your position. These actions must be taken by combat support and combat service support as well as combat units.

Lessons Learned

* Be careful of task force units, including combat support and combat service support units, becoming complacent about local security due to perceived safety provided by security and reaction forces "out front".

* Ensure that individuals pick fighting positions which make the most of natural cover and concealment and offer good fields of fire. Leaders at all levels should double check these locations. Once a suitable site is selected, the priority goes to concurrently digging, clearing fields of fire, and camouflaging. Overhead cover and connecting trenches are added as time permits.

* Do not allow soldiers to put up sleeping shelters adjacent to their positions. This practice negates any camouflage they put on their position.

* At least one claymore should be emplaced for each fighting position.

* Require each platoon to emplace one listening post no less than 100 meters to their front and an ambush site 300-500 meters forward.

* Identify, by SOP the type security you want for a specific circumstance. This will tell soldiers exact requirements and will provide a basis for inspecting local security. For example, during a halt in a road march, the SOP may state that every other soldier will face in opposite directions with weapons ready. This SOP is easy to implement and enforce.

******MANEUVER******

ANTI -TANK EMPLOYMENT IN THE NON-MECHANIZED DIVISION

Non-mechanized infantry may operate in a low intensity environment and/or in restrictive terrain. In these environments there is often a shortage of targets suitable for anti-tank weapons. Furthermore, the terrain may restrict the employment of anti-tank weapons.

Lessons Learned

* METT-T is critical when considering alternative missions for the anti- tank platoon.

* .50 cal machine guns, mounted on anti-tank HMMWVs, combine rapid mobility and a potent high-volume of fire weapon system. Employ this system in urban areas or in close terrain where wire guided weapons may not be practical.

* Employ anti-tank weapons to neutralize enemy bunkers and strong, points.

* Employ the anti-tank platoon as a night surveillance unit. Both security of the battalion and the training level of the gunners in night operations will improve.

* Use the anti-tank personnel and vehicles to assist with security of Enemy Prisoners of War (EPW) and to augment organic transportation. Non-mechanized units have limited personnel and vehicles to provide security or transportation of EPWs to the rear. Additionally, these resources can supplement the organization’s ability to transport logistics forward and casualties to the rear.

* With additional individual and collective training, the anti-tank platoon can augment the scout platoon or otherwise assist the task force reconnaissance effort.

* Employ the vehicles/drivers of the Anti-Armor Platoon for additional mobility and communication capability.

* Provide a method to recall the anti-tank platoon back into service as an anti-tank asset. Maintaining the platoon's original command structure and radio nets will simplify this transition.

******FIRE SUPPORT******

6Omm MORTARS

At company level, the most responsive fire support asset available is the company's organic 60mm mortar. Company commanders and FSOs, however, are not fully integrating the 60mm mortar into the company fire support plan nor employing them effectively.

Lessons Learned

* The successful employment of the 60mm mortar depends upon placing the mortar section where it can effectively support the mission.

- While the company is crossing a danger area, the mortar section must be in a position where it can overwatch the movement and provide fires as needed.

- During movement, place the section behind the lead platoon. In this location it can best assess the support needed by the lead platoon, position itself correctly and obtain ammunition from trailing platoons as they move forward.

- During defensive missions, place the 60mm mortars forward to exploit the range of the weapon against the enemy force. The range is 3900 meters with bipod, and 1300 meters hand held.

* Consider 6400 mil firing. In a low intensity conflict the enemy can come from any direction. Positions that will support 6400 mil firing are exposed and will require additional security.

* The 60mm mortar section has limited fire direction center capability. Most fire missions, in a mobile operations, use direct lay procedures, in the hand held mode.

* Movement of ammunition to the mortar section must be planned.

- A section usually carries a basic load of 12 to 15 rounds.

- Rifle platoons carry the remaining rounds for the company. Rounds are dropped off as the platoon moves through the mortar section.

- Carry the round in its cardboard cylinder in the top of the soldiers ruck sack or strapped to the exterior. Insure the round is placed in a convenient location or precious time will be lost digging through ruck sacks as the platoon passes through the mortar position.

FIRE SUPPORT EXECUTION MATRIX AND MANEUVER COMMANDERS

The fire support execution matrix is an excellent tool for the FSO to explain the fire support plan to the commander.

Lessons Learned

* Give copies of the fire support execution matrix to the Battalion/Company Commanders, Platoon Leaders and Platoon FOs.

* Brief the matrix to those individuals so they understand and visualize the fire support plan and can execute it if required.

* The matrix cannot be a tool used and understood only by the fire support community. The matrix, and the fire support plan, belongs to the commander. The commander should be able to execute it if required.

* Use the fire support execution matrix to conduct a fire support rehearsal. The purpose of the rehearsal is to ensure all personnel fully understand their mission and responsibilities in the fire support plan. Ideally, conduct this rehearsal with a maneuver rehearsal. If the commander does not understand the fire support plan he will not use it. The fire support execution matrix and the rehearsal overcome this problem.

CHECK LIST FOR THE FSO/FSE

Fire support fails when the FSO or the Fire Support Sergeant become casualties and their subordinates are unable to step in and accomplish the mission. Train your subordinates and then use them in providing effective fire support during periods of continuous operations.

Lessons Learned

* The check list method is effective in providing a consistent, quality product. This is particularly true during times of physical or mental stress or during prolonged periods of sleep loss. FM 6-20-50 provides the fire support requirements for each type of maneuver mission. Use FM 6-20-50 as a check list for developing the fire support

* Keep in mind that a check list is not an all inclusive document.

* Use the established check list as a tool to easily train all members of the FSE to conduct fire planning.

	LD/LC	**PL RED**	
TEAM TANK	FA PRI TGT CB 3002	FA GROUP C3B	
TEAM B	MORT B	MORT B MORT PRI TGT CB 3008	MORT MORT A PRI TGT CB 3125 MORT B PRI TGT CB 3225
TEAM C	MORT A	MORT A MORT PRI TGT CB 3010	FA GROUP C6B
BN CONTROL	FA GROUP C4B SERIES JOE	ACA ORANGE TOT 0800	ACA APPLE TOT 0815

******MOBILITY/COUNTER MOBILITY******

BREACHING OPERATIONS

Breaching obstacles is a significant combat operation. Failure to breach successfully, at the JRTC, has resulted in mission failures with heavy casualties, or loss of command and control. Conduct breach operations with a combined arms team using careful staff coordination, rehearsals and firm leadership techniques.

Recent Example

The task force headquarters received an order to continue operations east to destroy a fortified position. Scouts, augmented with engineers, began their reconnaissance of the objective. Even with engineer support however, they were unable to identify an adequate breach point.

The rifle companies crossed the LD. The company conducting the main attack became mis-oriented and attempted a breach from the east rather than the north as planned. The OPFOR discovered this breach and inflicted numerous casualties on the breach force.

Later, the supporting company attempted a breach from the north and converged on the initial assault company on the objective. The unit ultimately secured the objective after much confusion, fratricide and difficulty with consolidation and reorganization.

Lessons Learned

* Upon receipt of the mission the commander must focus on critical areas of the commander's estimate:

1. organization of forces; assault, breach and support

2. number of lanes required to breach

3. breaching technique and equipment required

* Plan and execute careful reconnaissance of the objective.

- The scout platoon, augmented with engineers, recon the obstacle to determine the most advantageous locations for the breach. Use other assets as necessary to obtain required intelligence.

* Upon completion of a thorough reconnaissance, followed by an approved breaching plan, and a rehearsal:

- position the assault, breach and support forces in the vicinity of the obstacle.

- guide the breach force forward to the breach location and conduct the breach.

- mark the breach point. Guide the assault company to the exact breach location. Guide the assault force through the breach and direct them to the objective.

* Prepare a detailed plan for actions on the objective. Brief the plan to subordinate commanders and soldiers in detail and REHEARSE.

* Mass engineer assets under their own chain of command. Piecemealing separates men and equipment and breaks command relationships at a critical time.

COUNTER MOBILITY OPERATIONS

The ability of the non-mechanized force to deal a decisive blow against a mechanized force will depend upon its ability to control the mobility of the threat mechanized force. The ability to control the enemy's mobility requires careful planning and synchronization of the assets available to the task force.

A Recent Example

At the JRTC a battalion was given an order at 0630 to conduct a defense in sector. The unit had 48 hours to complete reconnaissance, select and prepare positions. The operations order was not given until 1630. Initial Class IV supplies were not brought forward until 2030 hrs. The engineers did not complete the first obstacle until 0940 the next day. Significantly, the engineers quit work on the obstacles 6 hours prior to the expected enemy attack. This was due to a lack of training in night operations. As a result, the engineer unit completed only 15 of 31 planned obstacles.

Many of the obstacles emplaced were not located to support the scheme of maneuver. These delays in both operational instructions and obstacle emplacement were to have a significant impact on mission accomplishment.

The MRB main attack came at 0630. By 0705 the MRB were through the obstacles, seized their intermediate objective and were on their way deep into the friendly rear area.

Lessons Learned

* Upon receipt of the mission, develop a tentative obstacle plan to initiate movement of class IV and construction of anti-tank obstacles.

* During the wargaming process consider:

- the amount of time each company has to install the barrier material before the expected attack

- the amount of barrier material to deliver to the engineer supply point for the tactical obstacle plan

- the amount of barrier material to deliver to each company position with the limited transportation assets and the training level of the soldiers installing the material.

* A technique to manage and distribute barrier material is to develop a "pallet" of barrier material. The pallet contains enough material to build a type obstacle of a particular size. Companies must be familiar with the type material on a pallet, and trained how to place the material efficiently.

* Deliver the pallet to the companies by helicopter. Deliver the sling load exactly where the material is needed. Failure to deliver to the exact spot equals wasted class IV as non-mechanized units do not have transportation assets or material handling equipment to move the class IV to a new location.

* The battalion commander and the task force engineer must:

- coordinate the location of engagement areas and obstacles by conducting a joint reconnaissance.

- prioritize and control the use of heavy equipment in the construction of the obstacle plan

- do not overlook PMCS procedures to keep engineer equipment operational during this critical time

- intensively manage resources between survivability and counter mobility targets.

ARTILLERY DELIVERED FASCAM SAFETY

FASCAM is an effective munition. The safety area around the FASCAM minefield, however is extensive. (worse case, up to a 1500 x 1500, meter box around a 400 x 400 meter minefield) This safety area is a major combat safety-consideration for commanders, FSOs and engineers.

The safety area significantly affects troop and weapon positioning, maneuver routes and coverage of the obstacle by direct and indirect fires.

Lessons Learned

* The range of most direct fire weapons possessed by the non-mechanized battalion may preclude the complete coverage of the obstacle by direct fire. Indirect fires systems are therefore best suited to provide fires to FASCAM minefields.

* Due to safety considerations, do not place troops inside the safety area with the intent to cover the minefield with direct fires. * Position forward observers to watch obstacles. Provide observers with communications to indirect fire systems.

* Do not forget that the minefield is effective for a specified period of time. Do not emplace the minefield too early or it will self destruct prior to the enemy's arrival. If the battalion commander has a counterattack plan, insure the placement of the scatterable minefield is appropriately placed in the time and space for the maneuver scheme.

* Consider the time, tubes and amount of ammunition to deliver an artillery delivered FASCAM minefield.

- High density minefields will require a large number of rounds to be fired. During periods of extended firing the firing battery is vulnerable to counter-battery detection.

- Consider augmenting transportation assets to move FASCAM rounds to the firing element.

****COMBAT SERVICE SUPPORT****

CASUALTY TREATMENT AND EVACUATION

Preparation for combat must include plans to exercise the casualty evacuation system and continue the mission. Experience in Vietnam proved that troops sometimes become so concerned with casualties that they forget the enemy and their mission.

Lessons Learned

* Command emphasis

- Increased command emphasis on individual first aid skills, the buddy aid system and use of combat medics will improve the soldier's confidence in the medical systems immediately available on the battlefield.

* Battalion Level Operations

- Include the Medical Platoon Leader as a critical member of the battalion staff. Include him in the war gaming process and the development of the OPORD. Use his medical estimate to foresee the requirements for casualty collection points and evacuation techniques.

- Do not burden the Sl with medical planning if a Medical Platoon Leader is available.

- The battalion aid station of a light division has two forward treatment teams. Send these teams forward to areas where high casualties are expected. Request replacement teams from the medical company to augment the reduced capability at the battalion aid station.

- Use the Battle Roster System (FM 12-15 Wartime Casualty Reporting) for reporting and managing casualties.

- A non-mechanized battalion employed a pole-less litter (NSN 6530-00-783-7510, Litter, Non-Ridged, Poleless). The item is a piece of heavy fabric the length and width of a standard litter. A litter, carried in each squad, increases the availability of litters for removal of casualties.

- During a breach through an enemy obstacle and assault of a defensive position, a battalion gave the assault company a fourth platoon as a follow on and support force. The mission of the fourth platoon was to evacuate casualties. As the assault element passed thorough the breach, the fourth platoon evacuated casualties to the casualty collection point.

* Company Level Operations

- Casualty stabilization and evacuation re the goals of medical operations within a company.

- Emphasize the ABCs (open the airway, control bleeding and control shock) of buddy aid.

- Employ a combat lifesaver at each squad. The combat lifesaver should carry Ringer solution and an IV kit to assist in the stabilization of casualties.

- Insure combat lifesavers understand they are not medics and their first priority is mission accomplishment and not casualty treatment.

- Insure combat medics carry a fully supplied aid bag. Consider the factors of METT-T to decide if the medic needs additional medical supplies for the mission.

- Identify casualty collection points (CCPs) prior to an operation. Brief, down to squad level, the location of the CCP. (NOTE: Check points can double as CCPs) Locate CCPs out of direct fire range, in a concealed or protected area.

- Psychologically prepare your soldiers for the realities of combat by discussing what soldiers should do if their buddy is killed or wounded. Preparing soldiers emotionally will assist their actions to care for the wounded and continue the mission.

******COMMAND AND CONTROL******

CONTINUOUS OPERATIONS

Historically, soldiers operate on the battlefield for prolonged periods of time without sleep. Some soldiers have exhausting physical demands, some have exhausting mental demands, many have both. Continuous operations (CONOPS) provides only brief opportunities for sleep. Sleep opportunities that occur may be scattered through out the day or night. Sustained operations (SUSOPS) provides no opportunity for sleep. CONOPS or SUSOPS will have a significant affect on combat operations.

Historical Perspective

The men of the 31st Regimental Combat Team on the east side of the Chosin Reservoir in Korea had been under attack for virtually 80 straight hours by the Chinese army. At dawn on 1 December 1950, the commander, LTC Don Faith, and his staff decided on a breakout attempt to the south. The enemy attacks, sub-zero weather and the shortage of food and ammunition combined to create a situation where the officers and men were literally staggering with mental and physical fatigue.

Partly as a result of this fatigue, the breakout plans were poorly prepared and disseminated. Many officers and men were not even informed that a break-out was being attempted until they saw the trucks forming up. Soldiers began to panic. Equipment and supplies were abandoned. Command and control was lost virtually from the start. As enemy fire and road blocks halted the trucks moving south it became a situation of every man for himself. Most men who broke through the surrounding enemy forces kept going without a thought for their fellow soldiers left behind.

Of some 1000 men, almost 30% were killed or captured. Normally brave and strong soldiers could not stand the inhuman stress of the continuous operations.

(Taken from Roy Appleman, East of Chosin: Entrapment and Breakout in Korea, 1950.)

Lessons Learned

* Commanders must demand that key leaders discipline themselves to obtain a minimum level of rest. Command and control elements are the first to feel the effects of CONOPS. Judgment abilities degrade more rapidly than physical strength and endurance. Judgment errors begin to appear as early as 18 hours without rest.

* The following is a guideline of daily minimum sleep requirements and its impact on tactical operations:

- Ensure all soldiers receive a minimum of 4 hours of uninterrupted sleep or 5 hours of interrupted sleep per day (24 hrs). This is the minimum requirement for sustained operations. Sleep period are preferably between 2400 and 0600 hrs.

- Priority for sleep should go to those whose judgement and decision making are critical to mission accomplishment.

* Use drills. Train individuals on tasks to the point where they over-learn the job. Repeatedly train crews and platoons until battle drills become instinctive. The higher the state of training going into CONOPS, the longer performance deterioration can be "staved off".

* Identify and train back-up personnel. Individual job rotation gives soldiers opportunity for rest without degrading the mission.

* Develop a plan for rotation of soldiers between demanding and non-demanding tasks.

* High morale, unit cohesion and strong leadership reduce the adverse effects of CONOPS.

* Give consideration to soldiers who prefer to work during a specific time frame. Owls work better at night and larks work well during the day.

TIME MANAGEMENT

Historically units in combat and training have two enemies: the Threat and time. Time is the greater challenge. At the JRTC, time management continues to plague all levels of task force operations.

Lessons Learned

* Leaders must give the greatest amount of available time to subordinate leaders. Use no more than 1/3 of the available time for planning and preparation of the order. Provide no less than 2/3s of the available time for subordinate units to prepare for combat.

* Prioritize critical tasks and use available time to concentrate on those tasks.

* Use daylight hours for preparation of operations. Preparation (i.e. selection of defensive positions, inspection of soldiers, reconnaissance, etc.) requires more visibility than execution or planning.

* Time available dictates the amount of detail allowed in planning.

* Reverse planning is an indispensable technique for time management. Begin with the time an event must take place (i.e. LD time) and estimate the time each prior event will take.

* Attachments and OPCON units require lead time to conduct operations to support the task force (i.e. time to develop fire support plans or emplace obstacles to support the scheme of maneuver). Commanders and staff officers must make these needs known and integrate these times into the task force plan.

USE OF DOCTRINAL TERMS

Confusion on the battlefield can result from misunderstanding doctrinal terms. Terminology problems result from two areas:

1. Individual training shortfalls. Individual soldiers and commanders do not know the definition of terms or their definition has been modified by past experience.

2. Use of non-standard terms in combined arms operations. Task force level operations magnify the terminology problem. Combat/combat support/combat service support units work together for a common mission. However, the soldiers of the task force use vocabulary foreign to other soldiers of the same task force. Unique meanings to the same terms may cause confusion and error.

A Historical Perspective

The officers and men on both sides of the Battle of Chickamauga (19-20 September 1863) suffered heavily during the first day of the fight. General Rosecrans' Union Army of the Cumberland had spent the night creating fortifications in preparation for renewed Confederate attacks.

A staff officer riding along the center of the Union line saw what he thought was a division wide gap between the divisions of Generals Reynolds and Wood. In reality, General Brannan's division was in the "gap", hidden in the woods. The staff officer hurriedly rode to Rosecrans headquarters and reported what he had seen.

General Rosecrans sent an order for Wood to "close up on" Reynolds. General Wood, reading the order and knowing that Brannan's division was on his left, interpreted the order to mean move out of line and get behind Reynolds. Wood pulled his men off line and thereby created a real gap in the line.

By coincidence, several Confederate divisions assaulted that part of the line. The Confederate soldiers poured through the gap and routed the Union forces.
A misunderstood term in a hasty order resulted in a grave misunderstanding at a critical point in the battle which lead to a Union defeat.

(Taken from: Glenn Tucker, Chickamauaa: Bloody Battle in the West, pp.253-259)

Lessons Learned

* Base SOPs on FM 101-5-1, not on local terminology. Do not makeup terms for tactical operations.

* During the preparation of combined arms training pay special attention to terms that are used. Enforce the use of FM 101-5-I to standardize the use of terms.

* Analyze task organization of a task force for support relationships and implied missions.

* Require subordinates and task force members to conduct detailed brief backs in their own words. Pay special attention to attachments and OPCON units as different branches speak different languages.

* During the preparation and execution of a mission observe unit performance to see if they are doing what was ordered. If they are not, the reason could be a misunderstood term.

* During the After Action Review, concentrate part of the discussion on clarity and understanding of the written and verbal communications.

* Combined arms training must take place during professional development programs in the classroom as well as during field exercises. Combat arms soldiers can provide professional development classes to the supporting arms. Likewise Combat Service Support and Combat Support units need to share information on the nature of their operations.

******NCO CORNER******

COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR

The task force Command Sergeant Major is a critical asset to the task force commander. He knows the standards the commander expects and needs. A task force, like any unit, needs to have high standards, tight discipline and loyalty to one commander. Establishing and maintaining loyalty and standards in a task force is a unique challenge, and the task force Command Sergeant Major is the soldier best suited to perform this task.

On the battlefield the Command Sergeant Major can position himself where leadership is most needed. In one unit, at the JRTC, the Sergeant Major positioned himself in the combat trains during combat operations to push emergency resupply, maintenance and casualty evacuation assets to needed areas on the battlefield. Others are present to monitor and motivate soldiers when there is a particularly difficult mission; breach a minefield or assault a hardened position. Others spend a day/mission with each company, keeping the commander informed of unit capabilities and assessing junior NCO leaders.

The Command Sergeant Major has the maturity, the wealth of experience and the rank to significantly and positively influence these missions. Commanders must consider METT-T and decide where this valuable asset can best be employed to affect the battle.